

On the other hand, Ronsard remains
 absolutely free
 from that stiff over-formality that was to
 prevent men
 seeing any green thing with their own eyes
 in the two
 centuries of landscape-gardening that follow
 Malherbe.

Ronsard has plenty of convention. His
 garden contains
 all the classic nymphs and flowers that by
 tradition should
 be there; but suddenly he sees also what is
 really there.
 Just as, amid the vague and conventional
 imagery of the
 sonnet, we are suddenly transported into
 the very room
 where Hflene lies sick and weary, by the
 single line:

Et ta main qui le lict nonchalance traverse.

Most learned of poets as he was, he soon saw
 the danger
 of becoming a library-owl

*J'aime fort les jardins qui sentent le
 sauvage.*

And so his love of Nature balanced and kept
 sane his
 love of Art. For a moment in his career the
 depths of
 pedantry had yawned for him as for Ben
 Jonson. No
 poet has been a more conscious and
 conscientious artist.
 If he remained a human being, instead of
 dwindling to a
 man of letters, it was thanks partly to his
 love of beauty,
 in women and in Nature; but partly also to
 the Court.
 For however he came to hate ante-chamber
 and back-
 stairs, however we may grudge the weeks he
 wasted, like
 Goethe at Weimar, on Court-entertainments,
 it was not
 an unmixed evil when—

Perrot laissa les bois et aux Rois s'en alia.

Study, forest, salon—all helped to give him
 balance; and
 the Court did its share to make him the

Prince of Poets.

It is worth turning for a moment to the history of his style. Before he came, the fifteenth century had burnt itself out in flamboyance of technique, in verse as in dress and in architecture. Poetry had become an empty cupboard, with only a few old bones rattling inside it, itself